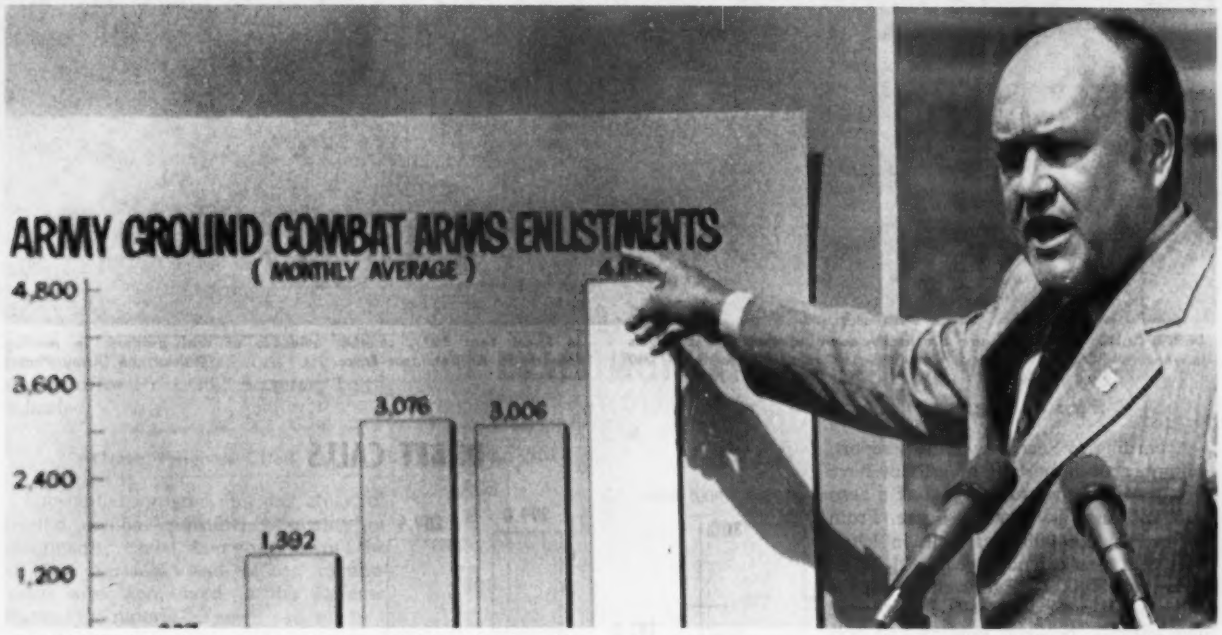
Special Issue: All-Volunteer Force

COMMANDERS DIGEST

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE • WASHINGTON, D.C.

Vol. 12, No. 19 September 14, 1972



ALL VOLUNTEER FORCE. Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird explains improvements in enlistments at San Clemente, California, August 28, following an announcement by President Richard Nixon that the Selective Service draft would end by July 1, 1973. (UPI Photo)

Secretary Laird: 'All-Volunteer Force Within Reach'

During the past three and one half years, the draft system has been reformed, draft calls reduced from 300,000 to 50,000 a year, a quality force maintained, the number of true volunteers nearly doubled, and the National Guard and Reserve Forces revitalized. As a result, the Department of Defense is now within reach of achieving an All-Volunteer Force.

These were the highlights of a special report entitled "Progress in Ending the Draft and Achieving the All-Volunteer Force" presented August 29 to President Richard Nixon and to the Chairmen of the Armed Services Committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives by Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird.

"We are within reach of achieving an All-Volunteer Force composed of 2.3 million active duty and 1 million Selected Reserve members," Defense Secretary Laird told the President and the Chairmen of the Congressional Armed Services Committees. "Never before has a nation maintained a volunteer military force of that size."

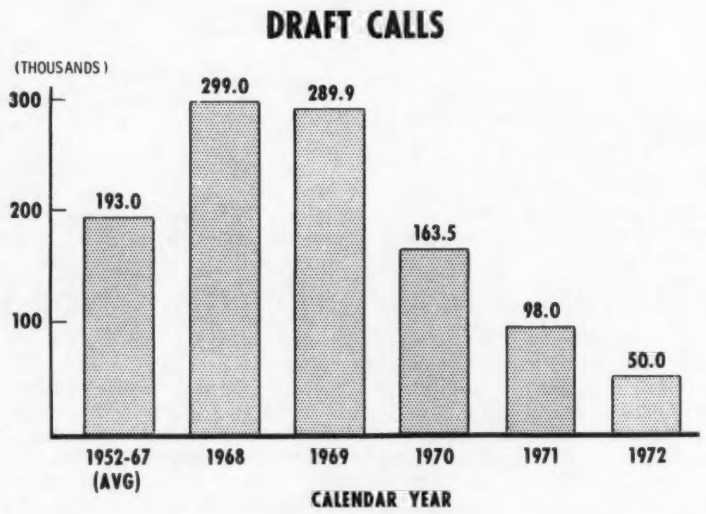
At the same time, the Defense Secretary cautioned that certain manpower problems remain to be solved. "But while great progress has been made in moving toward this historic goal, there are critical manpower problems yet to be solved. Their solution urgently calls for the understanding and support of Congress and the American people."

DRAFT CALLS. Draft calls are drastically down to their lowest levels in years—only 25,000 in Fiscal Year 1972, as contrasted with 152,000 in Fiscal Year 1971, another evidence of real progress in moving toward an All-Volunteer Force. (Official U.S. Army Photo)

Signs of Progress

According to Secretary Laird's report, a number of important milestones have been recorded toward the goal of a zero draft and an All-Volunteer Force. From the level of 299,000 draft calls in 1968, draft calls this calendar year will be no more than 50,000. "Every effort will be made to minimize draft calls, if not avoid them entirely, between January and July 1973 when the current induction authority expires," the Defense Secretary stated.

According to the report, the dramatic decline in draft calls has been made possible by substantially reducing the size of the Active Forces and by attracting more voluntary enlistees to military service. The size of the Active Forces have declined from a Vietnam war peak of 3.5 million in 1968 to 2.3 million at the end of Fiscal Year (FY) 1972, lessening the number of new enlistees needed each year.



'True Volunteers' Increasing

A second significant progress sign reported by Defense Secretary Laird is the favorable enlistment experience of the services in FY 1972 compared to the previous year. The number of true volunteers increased—and the quality of those who enlisted improved overall.

For instance, draft calls in FY 1972 were only 25,000, contrasted with 152,000 in FY 1971. Despite this sharp drop

in draft calls in FY 1972, enlistment levels have been maintained and the proportion of true volunteers among those who enlisted increased from 59 percent to 75 percent. "This is evidence of real progress toward the goal of replacing enlistments previously obtained by pressure of the draft with true volunteers in a no-draft environment," said Defense Secretary Laird.

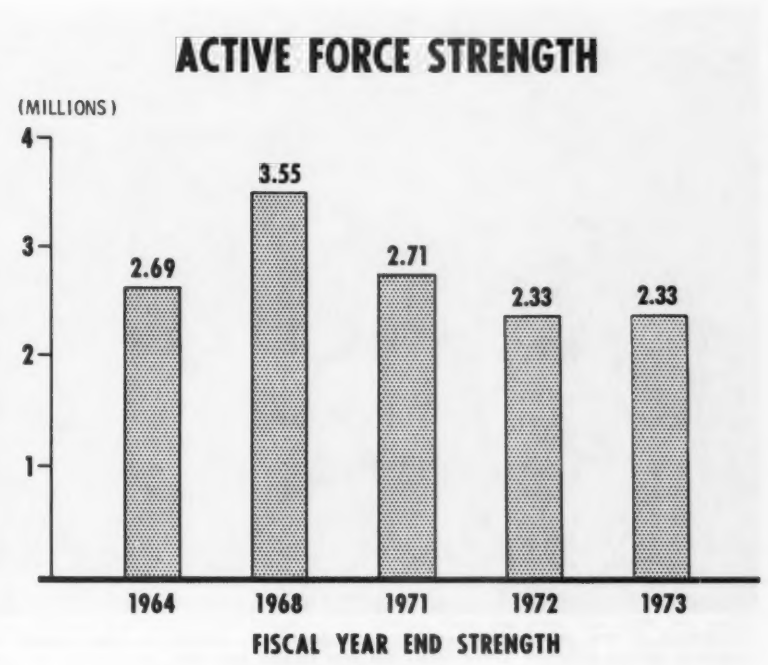
Several reasons were singled out for the rise in number of true volunteers. Among them were: the increase in military entry pay, provided by the Congress in Public Law 92-129, improved conditions of service life, modernized training, new emphasis upon professionalism in the Services, and greatly revitalized recruiting programs.

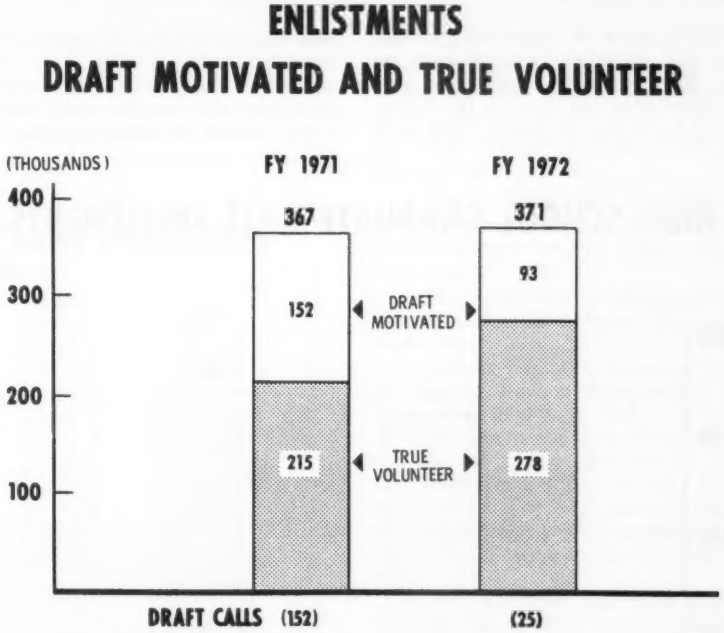
"The factor which may have contributed most to these volunteer increases is the improvement of the recruiting program," the Defense Secretary reported. He said a successful effort had been made to improve the quality of military recruiting and to expand the recruiting force. The Secretary added that recruiting funds in FY 1972 were 80 percent higher than they were two years ago, and the number of people assigned to recruiting was increased by 50 percent. "Future expansions are programmed for FY 1973," Secretary Laird indicated.

Other Progress Cited

Substantial progress in the areas of ground combat enlistments, quality of enlistments, racial composition of the Military Services, and officer requirements also were cited in the Defense Secretary's report.

A "spectacular rise" in Army ground combat arms enlistments was achieved when an average of 3,000 enlistments per month in ground combat skills were recorded from July to December 1971, compared to 227 a month in July to December 1970. The report noted that these increased enlistments still did not meet the required level of about 5,000 per month. According to Secretary Laird, "With Army combat arms enlistments stabilized at 3,000 a month for one year, we began a test on June 1 of the combat arms bonus authorized earlier by Congress in Public Law 92-129. A bonus of $1,500 is being offered to Army and Marine Corps ground combat volunteers who enlist for four years. Before the bonus test, there were some Marine Corps four-year ground combat enlistments, but none in the Army. The test results in June show that the bonus is effective in securing longer-term enlistments."





Meanwhile, favorable information concerning the quality of enlistments in the Services was revealed. Earlier, there had been some dire predictions that ending reliance on the draft would produce

TRAINABLE. A true volunteer is one who is motivated to acquire necessary military skills. The Armed Forces this year enlisted men with higher Armed Forces Qualification Test Scores than last year. (Official U.S. Navy Photo)

an organization of substandard volunteers. But, according to the Defense report, "Our experience during the past two years does not support this claim. During a period in which draft calls were sharply reduced, the quality of enlistees has remained high."

One indication of improved quality, the report said, was the overall increase in high school graduates enlisting in FY 1972 over the previous year. High school graduates in FY 1972 accounted for 70 percent of enlistments compared with 67 percent the previous year. "The enlistment of more high school graduates under conditions of greatly reduced draft pressure is a favorable quality sign," the report said.

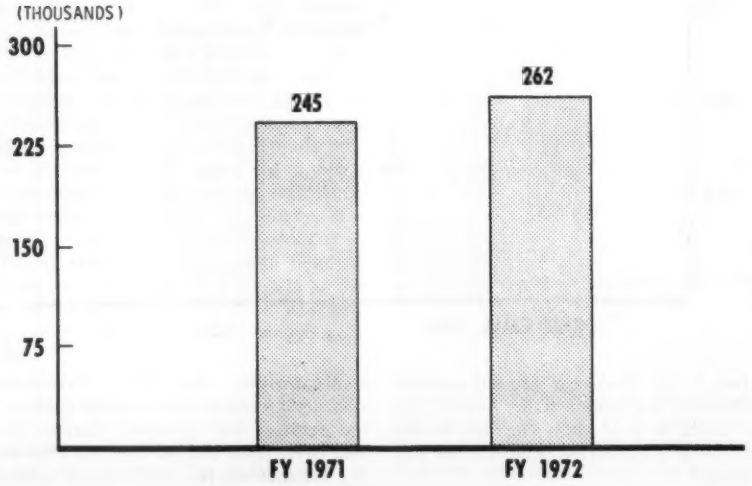
The report also showed that the mental test scores of those who enlisted this past year indicated that the quality factor need not decline with reduced draft pressure. "The Services in FY 1972 enlisted a significantly higher proportion of young men in Groups (mental test categories) I and II than is contained in the non-college youth population," it said. "They also enlisted a much lower percentage of Group IV men than is represented in this population."

Servicemen who score above average on the Armed Force Qualification Test are placed in Groups I and II, while average test scores place a person in Group III. Below average test scores result in placement in Group IV. Group V men are not acceptable for military service.

According to Secretary Laird's report, the Defense Department's quality objectives are:

—To enlist people whose learning

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE MALE ENLISTMENTS



capacities match the requirements of military jobs. An organization composed of bright people unchallenged by their jobs would be as much of a quality mismatch as an organization made up of people who lack the ability to perform their jobs; and

—To enlist people who display self-discipline and control, with all capable of following and some capable of leading.

Guard Revitalized

A third major favorable progress sign, the Defense report said, is increased revitalization of the Guard and Reserve in the Defense Department's Total Force Concept. Prior to 1969, it was revealed, the credibility and overall effectiveness of the Guard and Reserve suffered badly during the buildup of active forces in Vietnam. There were a number of reasons for this. The Guard and Reserve had a questionable combat role, their effectiveness was marginal to poor, and units included men who joined not in the tradition of volunteer citizen-soldiers, but because they wanted to avoid the draft and war in Vietnam.

"These conditions are being corrected, and there is highly encouraging evidence of revitalization within the Guard and Reserve," Defense Secretary Laird reported. There are six major reasons for this, the Defense Secretary said. They include:

—Their units have a mission. Within the total force concept, the Guard and Reserve Components are relied upon as the initial and primary augmentation for the Active Forces;

—Equipment inventories of the Army Guard and Army Reserve, badly depleted to build up the Active Forces in Vietnam, are being replenished at an annual rate approaching $1 billion;

—The Air Guard and Air Force Reserve are being transitioned into more modern aircraft at the fastest rate in their history;

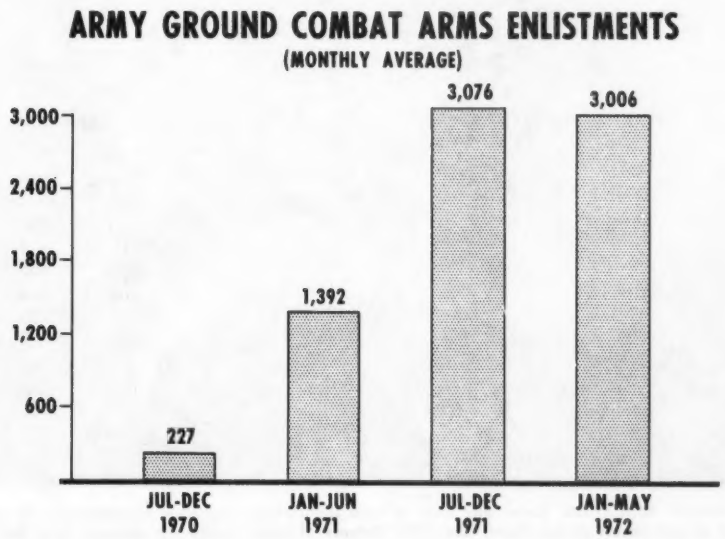
—Reserve Forces of the Navy and Marine Corps have been substantially modernized;

—Training has been intensified in all Guard and Reserve Components, and readiness is improving; and

—The Guard and Reserve portion of the Defense budget has increased from $2.1 billion in FY 1969 to $4.1 billion in FY 1973. The latter amount will be the largest single-year investment in the Guard and Reserve in our Nation's history.

"A well-equipped and fully-manned National Guard and Reserve, deployable on short notice, is potentially the most economical part of our defense system," Secretary Laird said. "An effective Guard and Reserve is also the best guarantee against having to use a peacetime draft in future years."

COMBAT ARMS. Enlistments have been increasing dramatically in the combat arms (infantry, armor, artillery), according to DoD figures. Latest statistics show that more than 3,000 men enlist in the combat arms every month. In the photo above, the oath of enlistment is administered to soldiers in the field at a Vietnam outpost. (Official U.S. Army Photo)



Armed Forces Racial Composition

The new Defense Department report also cited significant facts concerning the racial composition of the Armed Forces. Previously, concern had been expressed that a voluntary force would be composed primarily of black and low-income youth of all races.

Referencing the Commission on the All-Volunteer Force under the Chairmanship of former Secretary of Defense Thomas S. Gates Jr., the Defense report quoted the Gates Commission's conclusion, issued in February 1970:

"The frequently heard claim that a volunteer force will be all black, or all this or all that, simply has no basis in fact. Our research indicates that the composition of the Armed Forces will not be fundamentally changed by ending conscription."

The Defense report issued August 29 stated that the facts support this conclusion. "For the total Active Forces, officer and enlisted, the current rate of participation by blacks (11 percent) is lower than their percent of the military age population (13.5 percent)," the report stated. "Among the career force, all of whom are volunteers, the black proportion is close to the percentage of blacks in the Nation's population."

The Defense report on achieving an All-Volunteer Force also indicated that the proportion of blacks and other racial minorities in the Armed Forces is expected to grow in the next decade, keeping pace with population trends, the improving education level of blacks and increased service attractiveness.

"We are determined that the All-Volunteer Force shall have broad appeal to young men and women of all racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds," Secretary Laird stressed. "This objective is reinforced by the Human Goals program initiated by the Department of Defense in 1969, which emphasizes equality of opportunity for all uniformed members."

Concerning the subject of officer needs, the report revealed the military services met their requirements for 43,000 new commissioned officers last year. "Except for medical officers and a few other highly skilled and professional categories, we do not anticipate that the procurement of officers will present a major problem with the ending of the draft,"

QUALITY EDUCATION. Males who were at least high school graduates accounted for 70 percent of all enlistments during Fiscal Year 1972. Defense planners regard the increase as a favorable sign of quality in an era of reduced draft pressures. **(Official U.S. Navy Photo)**

it said. "Legislation has been proposed to Congress to assist in meeting the expected shortage of doctors and other specialized officers."

Solving Remaining Problems

The just-released DoD report indicated that great progress has been made in reducing reliance on the draft, but pointed out that attention must still be focused on solving several remaining problems. These problems are:

—To avoid substantial manpower shortages in the Active Forces, including those affecting critical specialties, by a combination of management actions and financial incentives that will increase retention, stabilize the force, and reduce the heavy burden of recruiting new and untrained personnel.

—To attract qualified volunteers and retain experienced personnel in sufficient numbers to meet the manning requirements of the Guard and Reserve.

—To eliminate the doctor draft by making military doctors' pay reasonably competitive with that of civilian doctors and by increasing the professional challenge of medical practice in the Armed Forces.

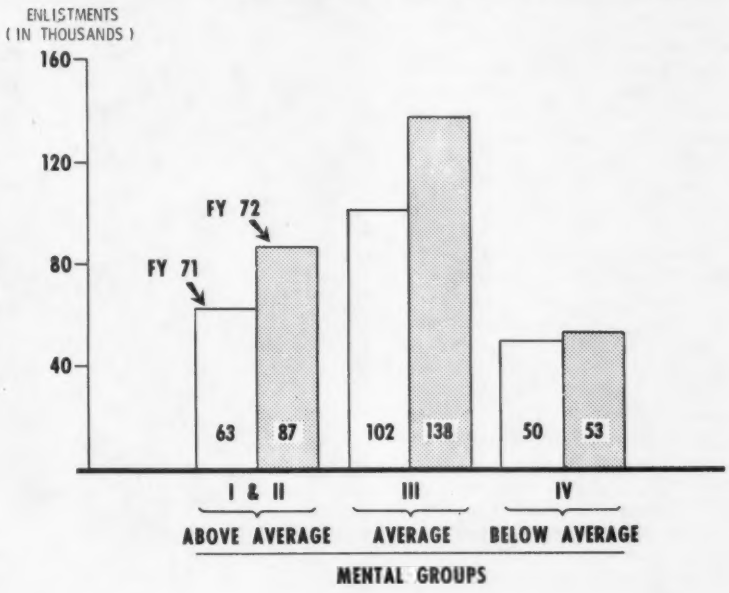
In describing how to solve its remaining problems, the Defense Department said it is adjusting its manpower policies and practices to cope with these problems, but the solutions will also require early action by Congress in considering:

- H.R. 14545, the "Uniformed Services Special Pay Act of 1972";
- H.R. 2, the "Uniformed Services Health Professions Revitalization Act of 1972"; and
- A number of additional measures awaiting action by Congress.

Special actions are required to maintain the strength and effectiveness of the Active Forces starting in FY 1974. Specifically, the Defense report said, management action must be taken to avoid a possible shortage of new recruits for the Army and Navy, and additional legislative authority is needed to assure the availability of critical specialists.

The Defense Department said that current trends indicate that a series of vigorous actions must be taken to avoid enlisted shortages in the Active Forces that could be about 40,000 in the Army and 15,000 in the Navy after the draft ends in FY 1974. Of primary importance, said Defense Secretary Laird, is

MENTAL ABILITY OF TRUE VOLUNTEERS



MENTAL TEST SCORES OF MALE ENLISTMENTS, FY 1972

COMPARED TO NON-COLLEGE POPULATION

MENTAL GROUPS (ARMED FORCES QUALIFICATION TEST)		NON-COLLEGE POPULATION, AGE 19-21	ENLISTMENTS
ABOVE AVERAGE	I & II	25	35
AVERAGE	III	39	48
BELOW AVERAGE	IV	26	17
NOT ELIGIBLE	V	10	0
TOTAL		100%	100%

retaining more trained and qualified personnel. "The availability of draftees and draft-induced enlistments produced in the Armed Forces the habit of underusing retention as a means of meeting manpower requirements," the Secretary said. "The requirement for new enlistments in Army and Navy can be reduced substantially by improving the retention of first-term and career personnel."

The Secretary also said that improved retention will not only help achieve an All-Volunteer Force by lowering recruiting needs—but also will result in a more effective force. "It is in our best interest to reduce personnel turnover, because experienced people are more productive than new people, and a smaller proportion of our force will be employed in receiving and conducting training," said Mr. Laird.

Selectively replacing military men with civilians and military women is another method of forestalling shortages in the Active Forces in FY 1974, said the Defense Department. "Many support-type jobs now filled by military men can be performed effectively and economically by civilians and military women," it stated. "The expanded use of these alternate sources of manpower can reduce the requirement for male recruits."

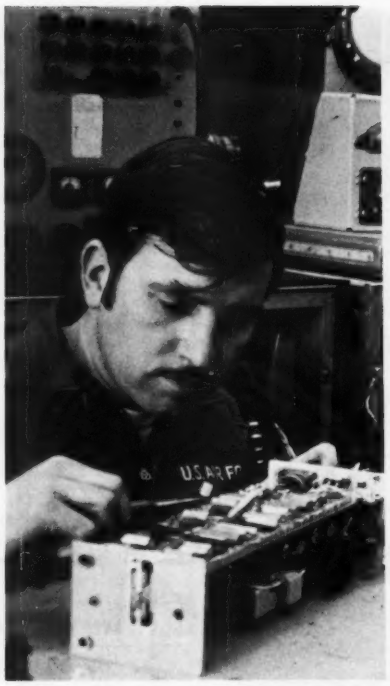
It was explained that the proportion of civilians to total employment in the Department of Defense increased from 30 percent in January 1969 to 33 percent in June 1972. In addition, the Services are developing plans for using an even higher proportion of civilians in the work force.

Beside this, it was announced, the Services are preparing plans which would nearly double the number of enlisted women in the Services from 31,000 to 59,000 by June 1977, with the addition of another 3,000 female officers. These plans will be implemented to the extent they are effective and feasible.

'Critical Specialists' Required

Meanwhile, methods for attracting and retaining critical specialists also drew attention in Defense Secretary Laird's report. The report said that, although military pay rates are reasonably competitive with compensation in the private sector, the Services are still at a disadvantage in competing for specialists whose abilities or skills command a premium wage in the open market.

"In order to cope with these special problems, authority is needed to pay enlistment and reenlistment bonuses in selected short-supply occupations for a commitment to serve for a stipulated number of years," said the Defense Department. "The bonuses may be viewed as a prepaid wage differential based on the qualifications of the individual and the unique needs of the Services."



MENTAL ABILITY. In 1972, 87,000 volunteers tested out in above-average mental score categories—nearly 25,000 more than in the previous year. (U.S. Air Force Photo)

The Defense report said existing laws offer some measures to cope with these problems: the Regular Reenlistment Bonus, the Variable Reenlistment Bonus, and Shortage Specialty (Proficiency) Pay. However, the Defense Department said, even in combination, these incentives have not proven to be completely effective in solving all enlisted retention problems.

According to the Defense report, H. R. 14545 combines the most desirable features of the Regular Reenlistment and Variable Reenlistment Bonuses into the Selective Reenlistment Bonus. "This incentive is flexible," it stated. "The bonus could be paid at any point an individual reenlists during his first ten years of service. The amount of the bonus payment would vary from a low of approximately $1,000 to a high of $15,000, depending on the severity of the retention problem in a particular skill."

A second significant problem confronting the Defense Department, said Secretary Laird, concerns maintaining a strong and effective National Guard and Reserve Force. According to DoD, by June 1972, the combined National Guard and Reserve force strengths were 49,000 below the Congressionally mandated minimum of 972,674. It is estimated that this manpower shortage will be reduced through August to the level of 45,000 or less, due principally to options exercised in the early months of 1972 by many soldiers who accepted early release from the Active Army to sign up in the Army Guard or Army Reserve.

However, it is estimated that this shortage will rise above 50,000 after the summer months, and higher still next year, unless early and positive action is taken to stimulate enlistments and reenlistments in the Guard and Reserve.

Solutions to Guard, Reserve Problems

A number of legislative solutions are necessary to insure that the National Guard and Reserve forces are maintained in a fully-manned and combat-ready posture, the report on the All-Volunteer Force said.

"A key provision of the Uniformed Services Special Pay Act of 1972, introduced in Congress on March 22, 1972, is the authority to use reenlistment and enlistment bonuses for the Selected Reserve," DoD stated. "The bill would authorize bonuses of up to $2,200 for a critical skill or up to $1,100 for a non-critical skill for enlistments or reenlistments of six years." Plans call for testing the bonus, once authorized, at lower

COMMANDERS DIGEST

A publication of the Department of Defense intended to provide official information to commanders and key personnel on matters related to Defense policies and interests, and to create better understanding and teamwork within the Department of Defense.

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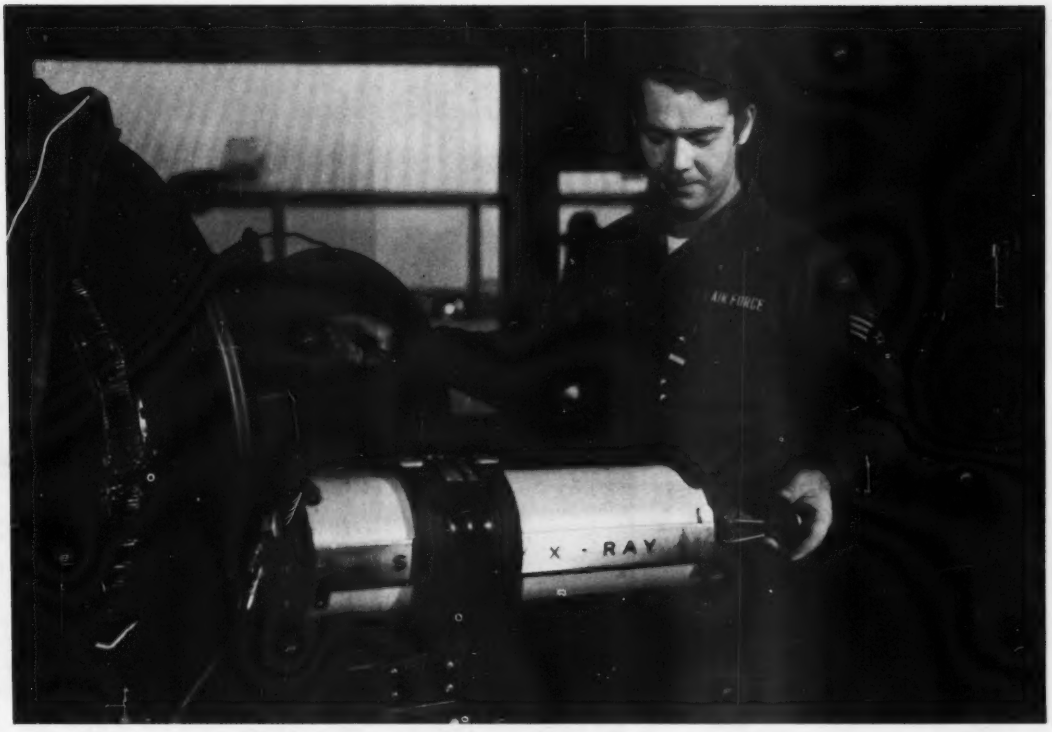


CAREER PERSONNEL. More than 73,000 career personnel were recruited in Fiscal Year 1972 than in Fiscal Year 1971. The Military Services are also making every effort to retain highly qualified career personnel. (U.S. Air Force Photo)

than the maximum-allowed rates to determine the least costly bonus needed to meet manning requirements.

The Defense Department said the help of Congress is also needed to correct gaps in the benefit structure and family protection provided to personnel of the Guard and Reserve. The following legislation, endorsed by the Department of Defense, will remedy these deficiencies:

- H.R. 11447 (and alternate S. 806), which provides for health and survivor benefits for Guardsmen and Reservists who are injured or killed while on short tours (less than 31 days) of training or active duty;
- H.R. 14742 (and alternate S. 3594), which provides full-time coverage under Servicemen's Group Life Insurance to certain members of the Ready Reserve and to members who are qualified for retirement but have not reached the statutory age of 60 when retirement compensation begins. These benefits would be provided at no cost to the Government; and
- H.R. 14541, which authorizes active force retirees who become members of a Selected Reserve Unit to receive both their retired pay and compensation from the Reserve unit. This provision would facilitate tranferring retired Active Force members into the Ready Reserve to meet skill shortages.

These important legislative actions, however, will still not insure fully-manned and operational Guard and Reserve units, the Defense report said. "The Guard and Reserve will still fall short of their requirements unless there is a vastly improved public understanding of their role in our Nation's security and an improved attitude on the part of American employers which encourages their employees to participate in Guard and Reserve activities."

In an effort to help solve this problem, Secretary Laird said, President Nixon on June 22 announced the creation of the National Committee for Support of the Guard and Reserve, and named Mr. J. M. Roche, former Chairman of the Board of General Motors Corporation, as its Chairman.

"The broad and vital charter of this national program—to improve public understanding of the Guard and Reserve role in our Nation's security system, and to enlist the cooperation of those who employ present and prospective members of Guard and Reserve components—will receive maximum support from the Department of Defense," Secretary Laird emphasized.

"It is also important that American employers—public and private, large and small—encourage and react affirmatively to employee participation in Guard and Reserve activities," he said. "Some employers are opposed to the idea of having their employees participate in the Guard and Reserve. Others are indifferent about it. In either case, young men will not join and remain in the Guard and Reserve in sufficient numbers if advancement opportunities or security on their principal job is impaired."

The third problem cited by the Defense Department report concerned making military doctors' pay reasonably competitive with that of civilian doctors, and increasing the professional challenge of medical practice in the Armed Forces. Among the suggested solutions were: increased use of paraprofessional and other personnel to reduce doctors' workloads, a tri-service military medical regionalization concept, increased medical school

scholarships, a Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, increased special pay for military doctors, and special "retention" bonuses to retain doctors beyond their initial obligated term of service.

Reasons for an All-Volunteer Force

According to the 51-page Defense study, a variety of student and other deferments prior to 1968 undermined confidence in the fairness of the draft system—and required serious consideration for an All-Volunteer Force. "For seven long years, from age 19 to 26, young men endured the uncertainty of an inequitable draft system which selected a few among the many who were subject to it," said Defense Secretary Laird. "The chance of being drafted varied by state and local community, and by one's economic status."

In November 1969, President Nixon signed into law a bill which reduced the period of draft vulnerability from seven years to one year. The following April, the President signed an Executive Order phasing out occupational and paternity deferments, thereby further reducing the inequities of the draft system. After this, the Draft Extension and Military Pay Bill, enacted in September 1971, contained key additional draft reforms. These included eliminating undergraduate student deferments for those entering college in the fall of 1971 and thereafter, and established a uniform national call to insure that men throughout the country with the same sequence numbers would be equally liable to induction.

"Additional reforms enacted by Congress, coupled with administrative improvements made by the Director of Selective Service, helped to restore confidence in the fairness of the draft system and defuse the intense opposition of young people to its inequitable and divisive effects," the Defense Secretary reported.

Secretary Laird credited the 92nd Congress, which extended induction authority to July 1, 1973, with allowing sufficient time to phase-out the draft and test the effectiveness of a variety of programs for the All-Volunteer Force, while maintaining the strength and quality of our military forces.

"The draft extension granted by Congress has strengthened our resolve to end the draft on July 1, 1973," said Secretary Laird. "I am still convinced that the interests of the Nation and the Armed Forces would be best served by achieving an All-Volunteer Force." This conviction, said the Secretary, rests on the following conclusions:

—In a peacetime environment, the Armed Forces will function best in a free environment where they compete with others for people;

—An organization composed of volunteers, having survived the test of free competition, tends to be more efficient than one that relies on forced entry; and

—The alleged pitfalls of the voluntary military organization—that it will be dominated by mercenaries, who will take over our Nation, or be all black—are false and unfounded claims.

THE DISTAFF SIDE. Women will play an ever-increasing role in the All-Volunteer Force. By 1977, according to DoD estimates their numbers will have nearly doubled. Women will also play important roles—typified by these young computer technicians working with a Marine non-commissioned officer. (Official U.S.M.C. Photo)

PROJECTED SHORTAGES OF PHYSICIANS

	FY 1973	FY 1974	FY 1975	FY 1976
REQUIREMENTS	12,800	11,300	11,300	11,300
SHORTFALLS WITH BERRY PLAN	NONE	NONE	800	1,515
WITHOUT BERRY PLAN	NONE	1,400	4,150	5,900

HEALTH CARE. No military force can exist without well-trained medical personnel. Legislation to provide worthwhile bonuses and other incentives to place doctors, nurses and medical technicians on a par with civilian counterparts, is now before Congress. (Official U.S. Army Photo)

According to Secretary Laird, recent Congressional legislation reduced reliance on the draft and permitted the Defense Department to move toward an All-Volunteer Force.

"The key element in this legislative program was a substantial and costly increase in pay and allowances for personnel in the lower enlisted grades," said Secretary Laird. "The higher pay rates became effective November 14, 1971, and were followed by a cost-of-living increase in January 1972." The Defense Secretary pointed out that for 13 years—from 1952 through 1964—there were no pay increases for military first-term members.

However, the Defense Secretary warned that the transitional cost of ending the draft will be significant. "Funds for Volunteer Force programs in FY 1972 were about $1.9 billion, will be about $2.7 billion in FY 1973, and may increase in succeeding years," stated Secretary Laird. "It is proper that the American people should bear this transitional cost in order to remove the financial penalties earlier placed on first-term Service personnel, to realize the benefits of ending compulsory military service, and to achieve a totally more effective military organization."

Completing the Task

In summarizing his report to the President and the Congress, Secretary Laird said: "We have moved from major reliance on the draft to mere minimum use of it. But even minimum use of the draft means that some young men are forced into service—and the fact of using the draft at all during peacetime only highlights the injustices inherent in it."

The Defense Secretary said the most difficult part of the job lies ahead. "Some may be tempted to compromise the strength of our forces in the haste to eliminate the draft," he cautioned. "Others may be tempted, in the interest of short-range economy, to disapprove the costs associated with the transition from a conscripted to an All-Volunteer Armed Force.

"There is only one right way to go," Secretary Laird concluded. "That is to maintain the strength of our military forces while moving to solve the remaining manpower supply problems as soon as possible. We are anxious to complete the job and end the draft by July 1, 1973. To do so, we urgently need the support of Congress and the American people."

Commander-In-Chief

Reviews DoD Military Manpower Needs

On October 17, 1968, President Richard Nixon outlined his views to the American people on compulsory military service:

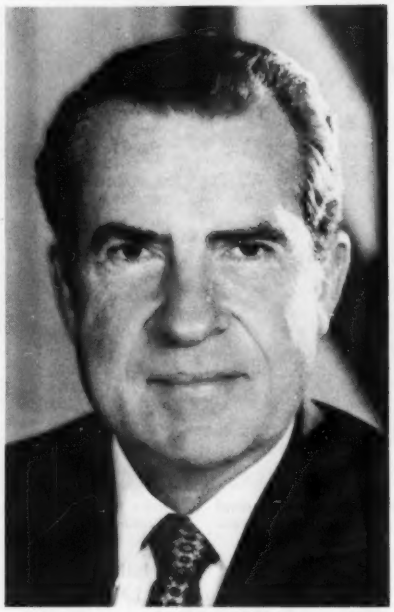
"I say it's time we took a new look at the draft—at the question of permanent conscription in a free society. If we find we can reasonably meet our peacetime manpower needs by other means—then we should prepare for the day when the draft can be phased out of American life."

Mr. Nixon amplified his basic viewpoint on the subject in a 1968 address:

"A system of compulsory service that arbitrarily selects some and not others simply cannot be squared with our whole concept of liberty, justice and equality under the law. Its only justification is compelling necessity. . . . Let's show our commitment to freedom by preparing to assure our young people theirs."

A further refinement of the President's thinking came after his study and acceptance of the basic conclusions and recommendations of an ad-hoc commission headed by former Secretary of Defense Thomas S. Gates Jr. The President had appointed the Gates Commission in March 1969, and, by February 1970, the Commission had recommended taking steps toward the All-Volunteer Force. In his January 1971 message to Congress, President Nixon said:

"While I am confident that our plan will achieve its objective of reducing draft calls to zero, even the most optimistic observers agree that we would not be able to end the draft in the next year or so without seriously weakening our military forces and impairing our ability to forestall threats to the peace. . . . I propose that this Congress extend



President Nixon

induction authority for two years, to July 1, 1973. We shall make every endeavor to reduce draft calls to zero by that time, carefully and continually reexamining our positions as we proceed toward that goal."

Yet a further elaboration on the All-Volunteer Force came from the President during an August 29 news conference at San Clemente, California. Asked about the reduction of Vietnam "in-country" strength which he announced that date and the size of the residual force in the future, Mr. Nixon replied:

". . . The announcement of 27,000 [by December 1] does not indicate that 27,000 is the force that is going to remain in South Vietnam indefinitely. We are going to look at the situation again before the first of December—after the election, incidentally, because we are not going to play politics with this new withdrawal, or announcement . . . because I am not suggesting that there will be another withdrawal.

"We will look at the situation, and the three principles I have always applied with regard to withdrawals will, in this case, control it; the status of our prisoners of war and missing-in-action (PW/MIA) situation; the status with regard to negotiations; and the status of enemy activity. At that time, we will determine what the American force level should be. It should be noted that the present force level of 39,000 and the level that we will reach of 27,000 involves no ground combat personnel. It involves only advisory and training personnel, and, of course, air support personnel. It is entirely a volunteer force.

"Only volunteers will be serving in Vietnam in the future. What is left now simply is to complete the long-term involvement of the United States in a way that does not destroy respect, trust and, if I may use the term, honor for the United States around the world. I think that we have made—it seems to me—made very significant progress in this respect and we expect to make more.

"On the negotiating front, we have gone very far, as far as any reasonable person, I think, would suggest, and under the circumstances, I believe the record is good."

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